



**Colorado Voluntary Organizations
Active in Disaster**

Strategic Plan 2011-2013 (No Attachments)

January 2011

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Acronyms

ARC	American Red Cross
COVOAD	Colorado Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
COAD	Community Organizations Active in Disaster
CDEM	Colorado Division of Emergency Management
DCT/VCT	Donations Coordination Team/Volunteer Coordination Team
EMPG	Federal Emergency Management Performance Grant
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operation Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
NIMS	National Incident Management Systems
NVOAD	National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TSA	The Salvation Army
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Executive Summary

This three-year plan represents the culmination of the strategic planning efforts undertaken by Colorado Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (COVOAD) in the second half of 2010. The reason for undergoing the strategic planning process was to increase the overall effectiveness of COVOAD so that it can better support its network of agencies and ultimately facilitate more efficient service delivery to communities affected by disasters.

Colorado has demonstrated its commitment to inter-agency coordination among disaster response agencies in recent years, as illustrated through several collaborative initiatives and grants. Recent disasters in Colorado have also highlighted the important role of voluntary agencies when disasters hit, with government partners showing an increased interest in collaborating with COVOAD members. This strategic plan is intended to leverage this recent momentum and cultivate continuous gains.

As the Colorado state chapter of the larger National Voluntary Organization Active in Disasters (NVOAD) structure, COVOAD strives to provide a forum that facilitates greater inter-agency coordination, communication, cooperation, and collaboration (known among the VOAD network as the 'Four Cs'). While COVOAD has fostered the 'Four Cs' among members, it was recognized that COVOAD needed greater focus, clarity in purpose, and increased overall effectiveness. The strategic planning process provided an opportunity for COVOAD's members and the broader response community to identify key priority areas that COVOAD should focus its efforts on in the coming years.

As a result of the strategic planning process, four main areas, or 'strategic themes', have been identified. The first strategic theme, considered a top priority, is the need for greater 'internal governance' - with an overwhelming amount of feedback urging for greater clarity in purpose and identification of priorities. An additional governance issue identified is the need for improved vertical alignment with National VOAD and regional VOADs and Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs). The second strategic theme entails 'building partnerships' with government agencies and the private sector. The third strategic theme is 'communication and technology' - specifically highlighting the need for a resource directory of COVOAD member agencies and the need for an improved web site. The fourth and final strategic theme identified is 'planning and preparedness,' with specific reference to the need for inter-agency coordination through planning efforts, and promoting training and exercise opportunities.

To ensure the goals, objectives, and tasks outlined in this plan are successfully executed and achieved, committees will be formed for each of the four strategic themes. Each committee will consist of at least one COVOAD officer and various other COVOAD members. Engagement of regional VOADs/COADs will be highly encouraged.

Mission Statement

Colorado Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (COVOAD) is a network of voluntary organizations working together to encourage more efficient service delivery to people affected by disasters in the State of Colorado. COVOAD achieves this by facilitating effective cooperation, coordination, communication, and collaboration at all community levels, and by providing a platform to foster partnerships among non-profit and faith based organizations, the private sector, and government agencies.

Vision Statement

COVOAD enhances the ability of communities affected by disasters to recover by maximizing the effectiveness of its member organizations.

COVOAD's Organizational Profile/Mandate

COVOAD falls under the umbrella of NVOAD. NVOAD was formed in 1970 when it was acknowledged that the voluntary agencies' response following Hurricane Camille (1969) was fragmented and uncoordinated. Thereafter, particularly in response to Hurricane Andrew in the early 1990s, state VOADs began forming throughout the U.S. to support state and regional needs.

COVOAD works to support its membership by facilitating planning and coordination efforts among response and recovery voluntary agencies. By working together before disasters strike, COVOAD member agencies are better positioned to provide more effective services and minimize duplication.

The core of COVOAD's success is its commitment to facilitate and enhance what is known as the '4 Cs': communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration (see Appendix A for more on 'The Four Cs').

The key activities of COVOAD, as with all VOADs, can be categorized into the following:

- 1. Planning:** COVOAD should strive to have a comprehensive understanding of the key resources and capabilities of its members as well as a clear idea of the roles members will fill when a disaster strikes. COVOAD should also clearly articulate what its role is in an event. Planning activities include regular and annual meetings, outreach, and communication (updates, newsletters, website...).
- 2. Convening:** In the event of a disaster, COVOAD should convene its members and other key stakeholders to share information, assess resources, identify needs, and develop a strategy to collectively respond to the disaster. COVOAD should coordinate with regional VOADs where appropriate.
- 3. Partnering:** COVOAD should strive to develop partnerships with key entities to facilitate effective service delivery to those affected by disasters. This may include, but is not limited to, government emergency management agencies, other key government agencies (human services, health, elected officials), the private sector, and voluntary agencies.
- 4. Training:** COVOADs should encourage participation in trainings and exercises among its membership through information sharing of training/exercise opportunities and facilitating engagement when appropriate.

It is important to note that COVOAD itself is *not* a provider of disaster and recovery services. Its role is to support its members so that they may be more effective in their efforts. Further, COVOAD has no authority over its membership and does not speak on behalf of individual members. While COVOAD may make requests of its membership in an effort to address needs, COVOAD does not have the authority to instruct members on how to utilize their resources or execute their operations. Participation in COVOAD and its collaborative efforts is strictly at the discretion of member agencies.

Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The table below is a summary of the SWOT analysis conducted as part of the strategic planning process.

Internal	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates the “4 Cs’ • Resources and support from Colorado Division of Emergency Management (CDEM) • Growing interest among members to collaborate, partner, and plan • NVOAD resources and support • Desire among members to explore how we can better work together outside of a ‘big’ event • Several active core members • Some members have strong relations with government partners • Some financial resources (dues) 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity (mission, priorities, value added....) • Limited outreach to stakeholders and potential partners • Weak vertical VOAD alignment • Limited institutional capacity • Apathy among members • Poor regional engagement • Poor use of time • Lack of depth among officers • Potential for misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities (and possible duplication of efforts) among members • Missed opportunity to develop lessons learned and best practices
External	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing appreciation of the value of COVOAD and its members by government partners • Support and opportunities from CDEM • Recent trends toward inter-agency collaboration • Growing interest from government entities to collaborate/partner • Growing interest from private sector to collaborate/partner • Support from NVOAD – increased interest in state perspective • Support and opportunities from FEMA 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge that COVOAD exists among some key stakeholders • Of those stakeholders that know of COVOAD, lack of understanding on what COVOAD is, what it does, and its value • Potential partners don’t know how to engage COVOAD/access resources • Gaps in services can undermine effectiveness and impact image • Poor engagement of many players

For the comprehensive SWOT results, see Appendix B

Strategic Themes, Goals, and Objectives

The table below shows an outline of the goals and objectives for COVOAD from 2011 through the end of 2013 broken into four main themes.

Strategic Theme I: Governance
<p>Goal I (Priority: Highest)</p> <p><i>Develop a common understanding of COVOAD’s purpose and priorities and communicate to key stakeholders</i></p>
<p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the overarching mission, purpose, and value of COVOAD 2. Communicate COVOAD’s mission, purpose, and value to key stakeholders in the response community 3. Outline COVOAD’s priorities/goals 4. Improve internal organization by clarifying roles and responsibilities of COVOAD and its officers
<p>Goal II (Priority: Very High)</p> <p><i>Improve the overall capacity and effectiveness of regional VOADs/COADs, enabling them to better support their communities following a disaster</i></p>
<p>Objective</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide support to regional VOADs/COADs to foster improved organizational capability 2. Develop stronger vertical alignment between state and regional VOADs/COADs to encourage greater engagement
<p>Goal III (Priority: Moderate)</p> <p><i>Improve overall capacity of COVOAD through enhancing participation, promoting broader agency representation, and increasing administrative support</i></p>
<p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow COVOAD membership 2. Encourage participation of members 3. Increase administrative support to support COVOAD efforts
<p>Goal IV (Priority: Moderate)</p> <p><i>Better utilize NVOAD resources by improving vertical alignment between COVOAD and NVOAD</i></p>
<p>Objective</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase engagement at NVOAD level and encourage greater utilization of

NVOAD support and resources

Strategic Theme II: Building Partnerships

Goal V (Priority: Very High)

Foster greater coordination with key external stakeholders through outreach on the role of COVOAD and how its members can support response/recovery efforts

Objectives

1. Design and conduct outreach efforts to ensure government partners are aware of the support and resources available through COVOAD and its member agencies
2. Design and conduct outreach efforts to ensure members of the private sector are aware of the resources provided through COVOAD and its member agencies, highlighting opportunities for partnership

Strategic Theme III: Communication and Technology

Goal VI (Priority: Very High)

Enable members of the response community to easily gain a working knowledge of COVOAD's membership, capabilities, and contact information through a resource directory

Objective

1. Create a web-based Resource Directory/Service Profile for COVOAD member agencies

Goal VII (Priority: High)

Increase COVOAD's ability to communicate and interface with key stakeholders and the general public, including an enhanced website

Objectives

1. Revisit/revamp COVOAD website to more effectively communicate activities, accomplishments, and general information in a timely manner
2. Use website for document storage and sharing
3. Provide regular updates to membership on activities/ accomplishments
4. Improve communication among members and key partners through use of Situational Awareness Tool

Strategic Theme IV: Planning and Preparedness

Goal VIII (Priority: Moderate)

Improve inter-agency coordination through facilitating planning efforts among member agencies

Objectives

1. Facilitate more planning efforts among members on specific issues through sub-committees/task forces
2. Improve coordination among members on regular operations and smaller-scale events

Goal IX (Priority: Moderate)

Increase readiness of COVOAD member agencies to support communities following a disaster through trainings and exercises

Objective

1. Communicate opportunities for and encourage participation in training and exercise efforts

For the complete Action Plan, including tasks, timelines and priorities, see Appendix C

Resource Requirements

Financial Resources

COVOAD has a modest budget of just over \$2,500 at time of writing. The only source of funds for COVOAD is through membership dues (\$25 annual) which is sufficient to cover basic administrative costs (bank fees, printing, URL fees etc...).

Human Resources

COVOAD is currently dependent on the voluntary efforts of its officers and members to execute its functions. The limited human resources dedicated to supporting the activities of COVOAD have hampered its ability to strengthen its capacity. The strategic planning process highlighted the need for increased human resources to ensure that the organization moves forward and the goals and objectives outlined in this plan are realized.

One option to address the lack of available human resources is to secure an intern (or VISTA) to assist in the administrative duties of COVOAD and its committees and help ensure each of the four committees stay on track with their respective targets and deadlines.

Another option to be explored is the securing of funds to hire a part-time individual that can provide management and general support to COVOAD and assist in the execution of this strategic plan.